

TESTIMONY OF SUSAN QUINN COBB
NOMINEE FOR JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
APRIL 23, 2009

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Committee, good morning and thank you for this opportunity to testify concerning my qualifications for the position of superior court judge. I am truly honored to be considered by you for this public office and wish to thank Governor M. Jodi Rell for nominating me.

Before turning to my legal training and experience, I would like to briefly tell you about my personal background. I am a first generation Irish/American. My parents were born and raised in small farming villages in Ireland, where their fathers worked as laborers. Hoping to find a better life and employment opportunities, they left their homes and families and immigrated to Hartford. Throughout his life until he retired, my father worked two jobs, as a full time West Hartford Firefighter and at a local supermarket. When my parents had me and my two sisters, they never imagined that we would have the opportunity to attend college, law school or to be nominated by the Governor to the bench. Such privileges, they believed, would be bestowed - if at all - on the next Quinn generation, their grandchildren.

However, with hard work and a supportive family, I was able to attend college and then law school. My proud Irish mother is in the audience today, and I know my dad, who died a few years ago, is with me in spirit.

In addition to my mother, I am fortunate to have a very loving and supportive family, who are also here today; my husband Mike and my two children, Sean and Meghan. Also with me today are my husband's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Cobb, who are residents of the City of Hartford, where they have lived for decades.

Turning to my legal background and experience, I have been a continuously practicing attorney since 1988, when I graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law. My first full time legal position was a clerkship at the Appellate Court, where I clerked for the Honorable Paul Foti. After my clerkship, I joined the law firm of Tyler Cooper & Alcorn as a litigation associate where I handled cases in state and federal court and administrative agencies, in a broad spectrum of legal areas including securities, first amendment, and freedom of information, local property tax, negligence and foreclosures. While at the firm, I picked numerous juries and tried a number of cases as sole or associate counsel. I also argued many matters to the court.

In 1994, I accepted a position in the Special Litigation Department/Public Charities Department of the Attorney General's Office and in 2004, the Attorney General promoted me to Department Head of that Department. The Department represents the Legislature, the Judicial Branch, the Governor's Office and all of the State's constitutional officers, as well as other agencies and officers, in state and federal court proceedings, and provides oral and written legal opinions to those offices. The Department also represents the public's interest in protecting charitable gifts. Many of the cases and opinions handled by the Department involve complex legal issues of substantial public importance. As the Department Head, I am responsible for overseeing all of the legal work of this busy department and supervising the Department's dedicated and hardworking attorneys and staff.

While serving as an Assistant Attorney General, I represented the State's interests in a variety of Indian matters, including court actions by two state Indian groups to recover land in Litchfield and Fairfield counties. I have authored numerous written opinions addressing a variety of jurisdictional issues involving state regulatory matters on the State's two federal

reservations. In addition, I have handled other substantial matters, including (1) representing this Committee in a constitutional separation of powers challenge brought by former Chief Justice Sullivan against the Committee Co-Chairs to quash a committee subpoena; (2) representing the Secretary of the State in a federal constitutional challenge to the State's voter registration law; (3) representing the Select Committee of Inquiry in two freedom of information appeals by the Office of the Governor; and (4) representing the Governor and a state commissioner in a mandamus action seeking \$1.2 million in state funds.

I am honored to have been able to provide the Committee with written recommendations from three public servants that I greatly admire and respect, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Comptroller Nancy Wyman and Justice David Borden.

I am sincerely grateful for this opportunity to continue my public service as a state court judge and assure you that if I am appointed to this position, I will strive to be a compassionate, fair, unbiased and temperate jurist.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee members may have about my qualifications.